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ABSTRACT

The develoment of specific programs to promote the education of girls in countries in which low female enrollment is a major obstacle to the universalization of primary education is the focus of this document. National statistics are presented for seven countries that still have low gross enrollment rates: Afghanistan (14%), Bangladesh (38%), Bhutan (10%), India (70%), Nepal (43%), Pakistan (33%), and Papua New Guinea (58%). The document predicts that the proportion of girls of primary school age not in school would be even higher if age specific rates were available. This document presents several activities to promote a continuing program for the education of girls in these countries. Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Papua New Guinea have established national steering committees of high level educators and others committed to the cause of women's education to promote programs that will contribute to universalizing educational opportunities for girls. These committees have undertaken national studies to identify current problems pertaining to enrollment and programs implemented in these countries to increase to participation of girls. (RSL)

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Asia and the Pacific Programme
of Educational Innovation for Development

# Towards Equality of Educational Opportunity

*Inter-country Exchange of Experiences*

Report of the Visits of the Regional Panel on the
Education of Girls, 27 May – 10 June 1985

Unesco Regional Office
for Education in Asia and the Pacific
Bangkok, 1985

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Chapter One

# INTRODUCTION

## Background

The Ninth Regional Consultation Meeting of Asia and the Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID), Unesco Regional Office, Bangkok in March 1984, proposed the development of specific programmes to promote the education of girls in countries in which low female enrolment is perceived to be a major obstacle to universalization of the first level of education.

It is seen from national statistics that seven countries in the Region, in particular, still have low gross enrolment rates - Afghanistan (14%), Bangladesh (38%), Bhutan (10%), India (70%), Nepal (43%), Pakistan (33%) and Papua New Guinea (58%) - and that the proportion of out of school girls of primary school age would be even higher if age specific rates were available. Gender disparities in enrolment are wide as the percentage of girls of the total student enrolment is less than 30% and 40% in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Pakistan. These disparities, in fact, have widened since 1970 in Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan because the rate of increase in the enrolment of boys has been higher than that of girls. High drop-out rates compound the problem of non-enrolment as the proportion of entrants in Grade I who complete primary education is as low as 19.9% in Bhutan and 20.4% in Bangladesh.

Unesco has therefore assisted in initiating several activities in order to promote a continuing programme for the education of girls in these countries. Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea have established national steering committees of high level educators and others committed to the cause of women's education to promote programmes that will contribute to universalizing educational opportunities for girls. These committees have undertaken national studies to identify current problems pertaining to enrolment and retention of girls in primary schools and to review policies, measures and programmes implemented in these countries to increase the participation of girls. A Regional Panel consisting of the head or a senior member of each national committee has been formed to facilitate inter-country exchange of experiences.

## The Regional Panel Programme

### a) Scope and objectives

As a concomitant regional activity, Unesco supported visits to four of these countries - Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan - so that members of the Panel could ascertain at first hand

the complex issues and multifarious strategies pertaining to the education of girls in these countries. The panel was supported by a staff member and a consultant from Unesco Regional Office.

The interaction of members of the Panel with those involved in the education of girls in the four countries provided opportunities for:

i) examining critical factors and common problems pertaining to the low enrolment of girls in primary education;

ii) sharing and exchanging experiences with policy makers, administrators and community workers in planning and implementing strategies to increase the participation and retention of girls in schools and non-formal education programmes;

iii) creating more consciousness of the importance of education of girls; and

iv) reviewing the progress of national case studies on the education of girls.

b) Interaction in the countries

The programmes organized in the countries provided for meetings with national steering committees, policy-makers, planners, administrators, educators, officials, international project advisors, national study committees, researchers on issues relating to girls and women, representatives of major women's organizations and non-governmental agencies engaged in educational activities, and media personnel. Interviews were also scheduled with key personnel in education and women's activities, and field visits organized to relevant projects according to distance and the time available to Panel members.

The activities of the Panel in each country are outlined briefly:

Bangladesh

The Panel visited Dhaka from 27 to 30 May and had discussions on problems relating to the education of girls and on national policies and programmes with the Secretary, Ministry of Education, Director-General, Primary Education, the national steering committee, key personnel of the World Bank (IDA) Unesco project on primary education, UNDP and Unesco officials and advisers and representatives of non-governmental organizations. The meeting with the national study committee of the Foundation for Research on Educational Planning focused on research findings of constraints and on programme evaluation, and a visit to the offices and primary school at the headquarters of the sub-district, Savar, enabled panel members to ascertain the infrastructural facilities for the provision of education for girls.

Nepal

During their visit to Kathmandu from 30 May to 2 June, meetings with the Minister of Education and Culture, the Secretary, Ministry of Education, and other members of the National Steering Committee provided panel members with an overview of the current situation and future policies in the overall context of national development. The Chairman of the Nepal Women's Organization and representatives of the Women's Services Co-ordinating Committee and its affiliated organization briefed the Panel from the perspective of the "beneficiaries" of programmes, and the tentative findings of the national study were considered at a meeting with the study committee. Panel members also visited a non-formal pre-school and part-time primary education centre for children of a socially disadvantaged group.

India

The Panel moved to Delhi on 3 June and during the four ensuing days discussed policies and programmes implemented in India with key personnel in the National Planning Commission, the Ministry of Education, the National Council for Educational Research and Training, the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, the Department of Social Work, Delhi University and UNICEF and Unesco Offices in Delhi. The staff of the unit for special programmes in the National Council for Educational Research and Training, who are involved in programmes relating to the education of girls and women, reviewed the studies carried out on constraints to the participation of girls and the curriculum materials that have been prepared to present a more positive image of women. Visits were also made to Bal Bhawan where creative learning experience complemented the formal school programme and to a non-formal literacy and income generating skill training programme for girls and women on the outskirts of Delhi.

Pakistan

During the last phase of the Panel visit to Islamabad from 7 to 9 June, Panel members met the Minister of Education, the Secretary, Ministry of Education, Chairman of the Literacy and Mass Education Commission, and the President of the All Pakistan Women's Association, Islamabad. Policy issues were discussed at meetings with the National Steering Committee, the staff of the Primary and Non-formal Education Wing of the Ministry of Education and project officials of the World Bank (IDA) Unesco Primary Education Project. Further insights were obtained from meetings with the Vice-Chancellor and Faculty of the Allama Iqbal Open University which conducts distance education programmes that offer a "second chance" to out-of-school girls and women, and with the Director and Faculty of the National Institute of Psychology which has conducted a wide range of studies on the socio-psychological aspects of participation of girls in education.

*Equality of educational opportunity*

Many issues pertaining to the education of girls surfaced from these interactions, and the perceptions of members of the Panel and their observations are spelled out in Chapter 3.

In connection with the Panel's visit programme it is necessary to record Unesco's appreciation of the warm reception of the Panel in each host country, the efforts made by the organizers to enable the Panel to have optimal interactions with national policy-makers, administrators and community workers, and the response of all participants to the demands of the programme despite local priorities and limitations of time.

Interacting with educational officials and headmaster, Primary School, Savar, Bangladesh

Meeting with the National Study Committee at the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation for Development, Kathmandu, Nepal

Visit to non-formal part-time primary education programme, Bhaktapur, Nepal

A class in a formal primary school, Bhaktapur, Nepal

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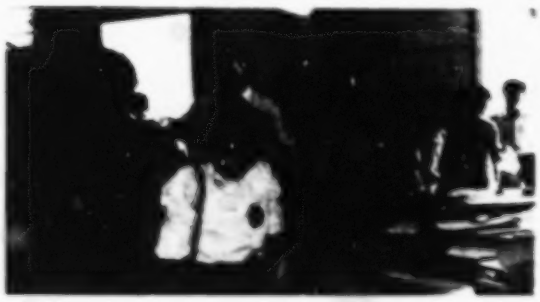
At the Women's Education Unit,
National Council for Educational
Research and Training, New Delhi



Bal Bhawan,
New Delhi

Meeting of the Steering
Committee at the Academy
for Educational Planning
and Management, Islamabad

At the National Institute
of Psychology, Islamabad

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Chapter Two

## OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION OF EDUCATION OF GIRLS IN BANGLADESH, INDIA, NEPAL AND PAKISTAN

A major input in each phase of the Panels' visit programme was the presentation of information pertaining to the educational situation of girls by national representatives in each country. This overview is based largely on these presentations and on the data relating to current programmes that was made available to the Panel.

### Bangladesh

The constitutional provision for a "uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education" in Bangladesh has been supported by educational policies in Five Year Plans. Yet universal primary education is still a goal and girls are more educationally disadvantaged than boys.

#### Participation of girls in education

Gross enrolment rates in primary education have improved over three decades from 48% male and 13% female participation rates in 1951 to 73% male and 38% female participation rates in 1984. The growth rate in the enrolment of girls is reported to have been almost double that of boys as the base was very low in the case of girls. Nevertheless girls continue to be educationally disadvantaged and gender disparities in participation are wide. Some of the negative features of the educational participation of girls are that:

a) over 60% of school age girls are out of school;

b) female participation rates have declined from 40% in 1975 to 38% in 1984 in contrast to male participation rates which have increased from 66% to 73% during the same period, and

c) girls constitute only 40.7% of the total primary school enrolment.

A major concern in Bangladesh is the high incidence of dropping out of boys and girls. This trend is most marked between Grade I and II as the survival rate in Grade II is 44.5% for boys and 42.2% for girls. Drop-out rates for girls between Grade I and II range from 57% to 73% in some districts, while the rates are slightly

lower for girls than for boys in urban areas. The problem of low enrolment is thus compounded by high drop-out rates at a very early age.

Sociological and educational studies have identified economic constraints as the major causative factor for the low enrolment and retention of girls in primary schools. The high opportunity costs of education for poor families are said to preclude both boys and girls from availing themselves of free access to education. Girls are further disadvantaged in that they are indispensable assets in the household of traditionally large families with their interminable child care responsibilities which conflict with school attendance. Moreover,women are not perceived as economically productive or income earning members of the family, and this concept as well as the tradition of early marriage creates a social climate in which their educational needs receive low priority. The distance to school from home and the consequent lack of easy access proves to be another barrier to the education of girls in an ethos of cultural conservatism. Both boys and girls are affected by in-school factors such as the failure to cope with class work and the lack of proper guidance.

Policies and programmes

Current policies are reflected in the Third Five Year Plan (1985-1990) which accords the highest priority in the education sector to primary education and to the achievement of universal primary education as early as possible and compulsory education by stages. It is proposed to provide physical facilities for all primary school age children, reduce the urban - rural gap in educational provision, expand community learning centres in primary schools, recruit and train teachers and strengthen parent-teacher associations.

Both boys and girls have access to free education and free textbooks in primary schools. The special strategy that is being implemented to improve the participation of girls is to increase the number of women teachers who at present form only 7.9% of the teachers in primary schools. Preference is being given, therefore, to the recruitment of qualified women teachers and it is proposed to fill 50% of the vacancies in primary schools with women teachers. To increase the supply of teachers, lower qualifications are accepted for women entrants to teacher training institutes, separate women's hostels have been constructed in Primary Teacher Training Institutes, and two Primary Teacher Training Institutes have been transformed into institutions to train women primary school teachers. It is proposed also in the Third Five Year Plan to establish a National Women's Teacher Training Institute in Dhaka. In the new system of decentralized administration in which the sub-district or upazila is responsible for primary education, women too have been appointed as assistant upazila education officers to supervise primary schools.

An innovative programme to increase the enrolment of girls is the Mehr-Panchagram Primary School project in which "feeder" schools consisting of Grades I to II or III have been opened within easy access of the homes of girls in selected villages in the Comilla district. These schools are staffed only by women teachers and students completing Grade II or III are admitted to the regular school. The success of this project has motivated the government to plan to extend it on a national scale. The government has also begun to utilize mosques to provide primary education facilities for boys and girls as a "feeder-school" programme to complement the resources of the formal education system. It is interesting to note that co-education has been accepted in Bangladesh as a norm in primary education.

A new programme is the World Bank - IDA/Unesco primary education project which has been implemented in order to increase enrolment and retention rates and to improve educational facilities and the quality of instruction. The project has concentrated in its first phase on providing or improving physical facilities such as classrooms, school furniture, tube wells and separate toilets for boys and girls, supplying learning materials and conducting in-service courses for teachers. In an effort to increase the participation of girls the project has also recruited and trained 500 women teachers who are expected to assist in increasing the enrolment of girls. The project has so far been limited to 44 out of 462 sub-district in Bangladesh but it is hoped to replicate it on a national scale during the Third Five Year Plan period.

## India

India has a long histroy of formulating policies and programmes to increase the participation of girls in education, recommended in the nineteen fifties by a special committee on the education of girls and in the seventies by the Status of Women Committee, and introduced through a series of Five Year Plans. Nevertheless a substantial proportion of primary school age girls are still out of school and gender disparities have not been appreciably reduced.

### Participation of girls in education

Despite a significant increase in the gross enrolment rate of girls in primary schools from 25% in 1950 to 66% in 1980 and 70% in 1982, a large number of girls are still not receiving a primary education while it is reported that 95% to 100% boys are now enrolled in schools. Gender disparities are illustrated by the fact that girls constituted only 39% of the total primary school enrolment in 1980. National level statistics do not reflect the wide regional imbalances that exist, ranging from a primary school female enrolment rate of 9% in a district in Rajasthan to high enrolment rates in districts in States such as Kerala. Survival rates for girls in Grade 5 continue to be low, 32.6% in 1960-1961 and 33.8% in 1970-1971,

thus indicating that the incidence of dropping out of primary schools has not been reduced over the years. In rural areas, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes girls are even more disadvantaged than boys. In the teaching force, too, the proportion of women primary school teachers has increased only minimally from 18% in 1950-1951 to 25% in 1980.

A large number of studies and reports have analyzed the reasons for low enrolment or non-participation of girls in education and the findings point to economic constraints and negative social norms and to the failure of educational programmes to counter these handicaps.

Poverty of resources as well as the need for school age girls to assist in economic activities such as in agriculture and looking after cattle, and in household chores and child care responsibilities preclude them from utilizing educational facilities. Investigations have found that the incentives offered have been inadequate to meet the cost of education in the case of girls in the most disadvantaged families or to compensate for the loss of their labour.

It is inevitable also that families give priority to the education of boys as social norms tend to ascribe an exclusively domestic role for girls with their future circumscribed by early marriage and child bearing and rearing. The social practice of segregation in conservative societies creates opposition to co-educational schools and male teachers and the lack of an adequate number of separate schools and women teachers in these localities is said to reinforce parental resistance to the education of girls. In view of the relative cultural immobility of girls, the absence of schools within easy walking distance would also operate as a barrier to participation. Educational factors such as poor facilities and a curriculum that is irrelevant to local needs have been noted to encourage drop-out in primary schools.

## Policies and programmes

The constitution stipulates the goal of free and compulsory education to 14 years, and it is interesting to note that the commitment to the promotion of the education of girls and the awareness of the multifaceted nature of the problem were expressed in official documents from the first Five Year Plan in 1950. The Report of the National Committee on Women's Education (1958-1959) proposed a wide spectrum of policies and measures including incentive awards, women teachers or in their absence, school mothers, part-time educational facilities for those girls who could not attend the formal school, and creches to relieve school age girls of child care responsibilities.

The Report of the Status of Women Committee (1974) reiterated the need for innovative measures such as special incentives, multiple entry to formal schools, location of schools within walking distance, part-time classes, mobile schools, recruitment of women teachers, facilities for younger siblings and community campaigns.

The Committee on Differentiation of Curricula for boys and girls recommended a common curriculum with home science courses for both boys and girls till the end of the middle school. All Five Year Plans underscored the importance of educating girls, the need for special measures and for motivating parents and the community to educate girls.

Within this conceptual framework and with the goal of universal primary education in view, several policies and programmes have been introduced to increase the participation of girls in education. A number of incentives were introduced in the Second and Third Five Year Plan in the nineteen sixties. Central government funds were made available to the States for the provision of attendance scholarships for girls, the construction of rent free quarters for women teachers especially in rural areas, the payment of stipends to women for teacher training programmes and the appointment of school mothers who would facilitate the attendance of girls.

In the fourth and fifth Five Year Plans, assistance to specific programmes for girls was subsumed in block grants and in the programme of meeting the basic needs of disadvantaged groups through the provision of free textbooks, stationary, scholarships, uniforms and mid-day meals for boys and girls, and residential facilities for women teachers. An evaluation of these measures in 1974 indicated that all these schemes were not in operation in all states. Lack of planning, non-involvement of village institutions and meagre allocations had limited the coverage and impact of these programme. The programme of incentives - free textbooks, stationery, uniforms and mid-day meal for boys and girls, and attendance scholarships for girls - was revitalized during the Sixth Plan period in the early eighties, but a study by National Council of Educational Research and Training has indicated that these incentives are inadequate to compensate for the loss of income from child labour. The Seventh or current Five Year Plan has introduced free secondary education up to Grade 12 for girls.

During the Sixth Plan years a special programme of non-formal education for out-of-school children was introduced with central government assistance, particularly in the nine most educationally backward states. Financial assistance was increased to support the establishment of non-formal education centres exclusively for girls and to appoint local women as primary school teachers as specific measures to improve participation rates. The Seventh Five Year Plan proposes to extend non-formal education programmes to meet the needs of half the out-of-school population, and 100% assistance is to be provided to non-governmental organizations also for the provision of non-formal education facilities.

Non-formal education programmes implemented in the states are seen to vary in scope and content. For instance, the Institute of Education, Pune, conducts UNICEF supported non-formal education

classes for out-of-school girls between 9 and 14 years of age in the late evening, using flexible curriculum materials relevant to local needs. The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration has organized a community based, participatory, development-oriented programme for boys and girls in Haryana State.

Curriculum development has also been a focal point of change. The Women's Education Unit of the National Council for Educational Research and Training has analyzed instructional materials to identify gender role stereotypes and has prepared new curriculum and teacher education materials that present a more positive image of women and may thereby assist in changing perceptions regarding the roles of girls and women. These materials, however, have yet to be used extensively in the States' school systems. At the Bal Bhawan non-formal education programmes provide opportunities to boys and girls to develop individual potential through creative learning.

A new perspective in programme formulation is seen in the development of early childhood centres for children between three and six years of age, particularly in disadvantaged communities. These centres are intended to provide pre-primary education as a stimulus to enrolment in primary education and to reduce dropping out by girls with child care responsibilities. The central government offers 100% financial assistance to agencies and individuals to establish pre-school centres and UNICEF supports the preparation of learning materials. The Integrated Child Development Service provides infrastructural facilities for child care programmes.

The creation in 1983 of a high level standing committee on women's education under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education, the organization of special cells at national and state levels, and the introduction of district and block level planning are intended to give impetus to the development of programmes for the promotion of the education of girls.

## Nepal

Nepal began to develop modern educational institutions only just over three decades ago, and despite the rapid growth in educational enrolments since then, girls continue to be an educationally disadvantaged group in terms of enrolment and retention even in primary education.

### Participation of girls in education

While numerous incentives have been provided since the beginning of the nineteen seventies to increase the enrolment of girls, the proportion of girls in the total primary school population has increased from 18.3% in 1975 to only 28% in 1983. Over half the primary school age girls are out of school as the gross enrolment rate is 43% while almost alll boys are reported to be enrolled in schools. Moreover, 40% to 95% girls have been found to have dropped

out from primary schools in different districts. District wise disparities in enrolment are wide and participation rates of girls are very low in the remote Far Western Region and in some conservative districts in Southern Nepal.

Several studies have identified the causes of non-participation and low retention. It has been pointed out that the opportunity cost of education relative to the poor economic conditions of families is the major cause of non-enrolment and early leaving. In Nepal's economy girls assist their parents from a very early age in farm work and in looking after cattle. They are also economic assets within the household and have child care responsibilities. The study on the 'Status of Women in Nepal' reported that the work schedule of young girls was as long as that of an adult male.

Direct costs such as school supplies and the distance to school in the context of Nepal's difficult physical terrain are perceived to be contributory factors to low enrolment rates. Reinforcing all these factors are the negative attitudes of parents who, in view of the social practice of early marriage, see investment in the education of girls as a waste of scarce resources.

It is claimed also that the education system exacerbates the difficulties faced by girls. The rigid school schedule does not take into account the competing economic and domestic demands imposed on girls. Poor school conditions, curriculum irrelevance and the lack of community support for the education of girls promote dropping out. While these causes have been widely discussed it is felt that there have been few significant changes in this situation over the years.

Policies and programmes

The constitution embodies the principle of equal educational opportunity and the Sixth and Seventh Five Year Plans have underscored the importance of special measures for the education of girls. Consequently, in addition to the provision of free primary education in 1975 and free primary textbooks in 1979, special incentives and intervention programmes have been introduced to increase the participation of girls.

In 1975 as a result of the consciousness generated by International Women's Year, free tuition and textbooks were provided to girls in the officially designated remote districts at all levels of the school system, and incentive awards were introduced to promote the enrolment of girls. These incentives have been extended in 1983 with the implementation of a scholarship programme for school age girls in three remote districts in the Far Western Region. Incentive awards to the school that had the highest enrolment of girls in four zones have also been introduced.

In the cultural context of Nepal it was considered important to increase the number of women teachers in primary schools, as only 3% of primary school teachers were women in 1970. In 1970 therefore

the Equal Access of Women to Education Programme (or as it was renamed in 1983, the Education of Girls and Women in Nepal Project) was introduced with the assistance of Unesco and subsequently with support from UNICEF and the Unesco-NORAD Funds-in-Trust Programmes to train rural women as primary school teachers and to employ them in village primary schools especially in remote areas so that they may help to enrol more girls in schools. Beginning as a pilot project in one teacher training campus, the project is now a national programme, using 5 campuses and 11 secondary schools in different parts of the country and drawing students from 74 of the 75 districts of Nepal. It has as its adjunct an upgrading programme which enables drop-outs from remote areas to complete their secondary education and qualify for entrance to the teacher training programme. Incentives were in-built into the project in the form of monthly stipends, teaching-learning materials and free residential facilities. It is reported that at least three-fourths of these trainees are teaching in primary schools and that they have had a positive impact on community attitudes to the education of girls.

Two new components of the programme have been introduced subsequently. Local high school scholarships were given to increase the intake from remote areas to the teacher training programme from 1983. From 1984 part-time, non-formal primary education classes have been organized at times convenient to girls in disadvantaged communities.

An innovative programme to increase the participation of girls was introduced in 1982 as a major component of the Education for Rural Development Project in the Seti Zone in the remote Far Western Region. Non-formal part-time education classes were organized for out of school girls in a district with very low enrolment and special curriculum materials were prepared after an analysis of the educational and social needs of girls in the region.

The Seventh Five Year Plan introduced in 1985 proposes a programme of accelerated part-time education for those who cannot attend the formal school and it is expected that such programmes will be expanded in the next few years.

A new programme that is scheduled to be in operation from 1985 is the Girls' Access to Education project which will establish pre-school centres near primary schools to facilitate access to schools and reduce dropping out by girls whose child care responsibilities confine them to their homes.

The Ministry of Education has recognized the importance of extending educational opportunity to girls by establishing in 1983 a Women's Education Unit which is responsible for co-ordinating, and monitoring special education programmes for girls. The National Plan of Action prepared by women's organizations in 1982 has also helped to identify priorities for official and non-official action.

## Pakistan

Low female literacy and participation rates, particularly in rural areas, and gender disparities have focused attention in Pakistan on the education of girls, and policy documents since 1971 and recent Five Year Plans have attempted to promote female education, although these plans have been stymied by resource constraints and competing priorities.

### Participation of girls in education

Participation rates in primary education in Pakistan have increased since 1947 and the rate of increase in the enrolment of girls has been higher than that of boys as participation rates were abysmally low in the early years. In 1959-1960, for instance, primary school gross enrolment rates were 42% for boys and 9% for girls while the position in 1983 was 63% for boys and 32% for girls. Urban - rural differentials are also wide, particularly in the case of girls who have a participation rate of 68% in urban areas and only 20% in rural areas. Gender disparities are apparent in the percentage of girls in the total primary school enrolment which was 14.2% in 1947-1948, 26.3% in 1969-1970, and 32.02% in 1983-1984. Over half the entrants to Grade I are reported to drop-out before they reach Grade V. Inequalities are also evident in the provision of schools as 52% of urban schools and 30% of rural schools are girls' schools. The education of girls has therefore lagged behind and disparities have not been significantly narrowed.

A major barrier identified is the inability to meet the demand for schools as a result of rapid population growth and lack of financial resources. Schools are poor in accommodation and equipment, particularly in rural areas where there are one or two teacher schools with a few classrooms, and they are consequently unable to attract students. Girls are specially disadvantaged because social conservatism has created a demand for separate girls' schools which, however, receive low priority because social pressures are for the expansion of boys' schools.

Mass poverty and socio-cultural constraints are barriers to the utilization of even the limited facilities that are available. Parents have negative attitudes to the education of girls, and women teachers, who may assist in overcoming cultural resistance, are in short supply. The research studies carried out by the National Institute of Psychology have provided useful information on rural attitudes to the education of girls, on their negative self concepts and low achievement motivation and on socio-cultural constraints to the participation of girls in education.

### Policies and programmes

Policies and Five Year Plans especially since 1970 have given priority to universal primary education. Primary education is free

and World Bank - IDA/Unesco project is expected to improve the infrastructure and quality of primary education. In the late nineteen seventies policy documents and the Fifth Five Year Plan stressed the need to give priority to expanding educational facilities for girls through greater resource allocation, construction and repair of schools and appointment of women teachers. These objectives, however, have not been achieved as a result of financial constraints that affected adversely the construction and recruitment programmes. The situation is complicated by the demand for separate schools for girls although official policy has sought to encourage co-educational schools and to provide separate schools where co-education is not feasible.

Resource constraints have also compelled the administration to utilize indigenous structures such as Mohalla schools (in homes) and mosques. It was envisaged in 1979 that 5000 Mohalla schools would be established as an experiment in primary education. In actual fact progress has been reported to be slow as satisfactory arrangements for supervision of these classes held in private homes could not be worked out. Mohalla schools have also been traditionally urban based although it is hoped to expand them in rural areas with the assistance of local bodies and the community.

The Sixth Five Year Plan (1983-1985) proposed to use mosques for Grades I to III classes in areas where there are no schools or where schools are overcrowded. Both boys and girls are admitted to these classes and a primary school teacher has been appointed to assist the Imam. These mosque schools have proved to be popular and appear to be culturally acceptable to conservative sections of society. It is reported that they have increased enrolment substantially in Sind and in the scattered villages of Baluchistan, and that the plan target of 8000 mosque schools has been reached in two years.

Future policies are directed to concentrating on universalizing enrolment in Grades I to III in formal primary schools and in mosque schools as a first step to universalization of primary education. Investment in primary education has been substantially increased in current budgetary allocations, and in order to increase the participation rate of girls from 32% to 60%, a project has been formulated to provide 4,500 girls' schools in the rural areas within the next five years.

The second strategy that has been formulated to improve the participation of girls is to increase the number of women teachers who currently form 32% of the teaching force, convert some primary teacher training institutes into women's teacher training institutes, and to construct residences for women teachers. It has even been suggested that male primary school teachers should be gradually replaced by women teachers. Very little has been reported to have been achieved in this respect as financial constraints have not permitted a major expansion of facilities or recruitment of teachers.

The residences constructed for women teachers in rural areas under the IDA project have not been utilized by women teachers for reasons of security where unmarried teachers are concerned. It is also proposed under the follow up IDA project to appoint elderly women as local co-ordinators to assist the administration in monitoring project implementation in primary schools.

Other supportive programmes are the 25,000 literacy centres established by the Literacy and Mass Education Commission established in 1981 and the distance education programmes developed by Allama Iqbal Open University in functional literacy for those who have never been to school, in a second chance course for middle school drop outs, and in primary teacher training for men and women teachers.

## Conclusion

It is apparent from this overview that all four countries share largely common problems of low female enrolment and retention and constraints that stem from the travails of economically developing societies and from cultural lags manifest in traditional societies. Each country has expressed commitment to improving the participation of girls both in policy documents and in programmes that have been formulated. Strategies differ in their emphasis and have had varying success, and programme implementation has been conditioned by local circumstances. Conceptualization of issues and perceptions of appropriate strategies have not changed significantly over nearly four decades, and it is salutary to note that the impact of all the programmes enumerated on the situation of girls has not been commensurate with either expectations or needs.

The situation in these four countries with regard to the availability of special programmes and supportive structures for the education of girls and the areas in which each country has accumulated experiences that can be shared with other countries are depicted in the following table.

*Equality of educational opportunity*

Strategies and Programmes

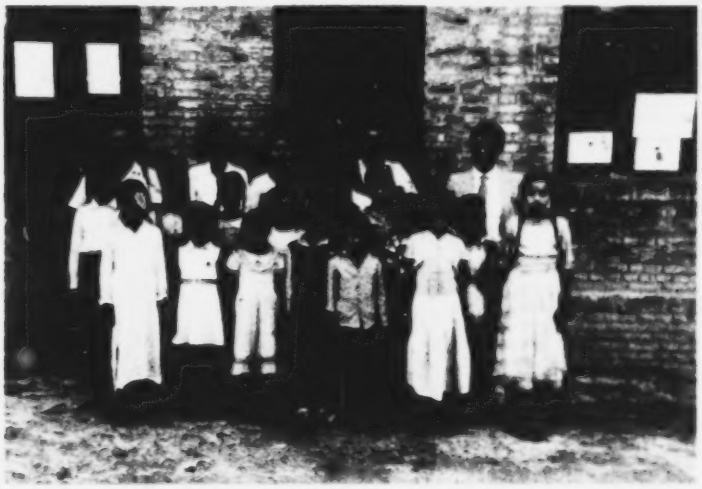
| Areas | Bangladesh | India | Nepal | Pakistan |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Provision of education | | | | |
| (i) Separate schools for girls | | X | | X |
| (ii) Multiple entry to formal school | | X | X | |
| (iii) Part-time non-formal education classes | | X | X | |
| (iv) Feeder schools | X | | | |
| (v) Use of indigeneous institutions for primary education e.g. mosques | X | | | X |
| (vi) Distance education | | | | X |
| 2. Provision of incentives | | | | |
| (i) Free tuition | X | X | X | X |
| (ii) Free textbooks | X | X | X | |
| (iii) Free stationery | | X | | |
| (iv) Free uniforms | X | X | | |
| (v) Free mid-day meals | X | X | | |
| (vi) Scholarships | | X | X | |
| (vii) Attendance scholarships | | X | | |
| (viii) Incentive awards for high enrolment of girls | | | X | |
| 3. Curriculum development | | | | |
| (i) Examination of gender role stereotypes | X | X | | X |
| (ii) Preparation of curriculum materials to present positive image of women | | X | | |
| (iii) Needs based curriculum | | X | | |
| (iv) Curriculum materials relevant to local needs | | X | X | |
| (v) Creative learning experiences to develop individual potential | | X | | |

| Areas | Bangladesh | India | Nepal | Pakistan |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. Supply and training of teachers | | | | |
| (i) Recruitment of more women teachers | X | X | X | X |
| (ii) Rent free residences for women teachers | | X | | X |
| (iii) Training programmes for women teachers with stipends | X | | X | |
| (iv) Rent free hostels for women teacher trainees | X | | X | |
| (v) Upgrading programmes to increase the intake women of teacher trainees | | | X | |
| (vi) Use of drop-outs as women teachers/ facilitators | | | X | |
| 5. Support structures for universal primary education | | | | |
| (i) Pre-school/child care centre | | X | X | |
| (ii) School mothers | | X | | |
| (iii) Literacy centres for adults/parents in support of primary education | | X | | X |
| (iv) Community campaigns for universalization of primary education | | X | | X |
| (v) Supportive programmes by women's organizations | X | X | X | X |
| (vi) Institutions undertaking research studies on women | X | X | X | X |

| Areas | Bangladesh | India | Nepal | Pakistan |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. Co-ordination, Monitoring and Evaluation | | | | |
| (i) Special Committee on education of girls | X | X | X | X |
| (ii) Women's education unit/cell | | X | X | |
| (iii) Women supervisors | X | | | |
| (iv) Women local co-ordinators | | | | X |
| (v) Evaluation studies | X | X | X | X |

Notes: The data presented in this table is based on the information available in country papers and other documents made available to the Panel. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of programmes in each country.

Non-formal part-time primary education programme for children of socially, economically disadvantaged families, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu



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Creative learning at Bal Bhawan,
New Delhi, India

## Chapter Three

## A SYNTHESIS OF OBSERVATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

Many issues that have relevance for the formulation and implementation of programmes for the promotion of the education of girls surfaced during the interchange of experiences between members of the Panel and national representatives in the four countries. The main observations of Panel members and some of the views of national policy makers, educators and others involved in educational programmes for girls that were presented are synthesized here as a useful review of past experiences and as a framework that may help to determine the direction of future programmes.

### Conceptual issues

The concept of equal access of girls to education is legitimated by the principles of human rights and distributive social justice and by the role of women in national development. The Panel noted that the Constitutions of all four countries embodied the principle of equal educational opportunity, and that policy documents and plans envisaged the achievement of universal primary education in the foreseeable future.

There was, however, little explicit conceptualization of the educational needs of girls in these statements of intent and considerable divergence between objectives, policies and outcomes, which may be the result of planning perspectives or of macro contextual factors. In India and Nepal almost all boys of primary school age were reported to be enrolled in schools and there was strong awareness that special efforts were needed to bring girls within the ambit of the educational system if universal primary education was to be achieved early. It was not clear to the Panel whether the issue of equal access has received adequate priority in a context in which a significant though lesser proportion of boys were also out of school, given a social climate that was traditionally accorded precedence to males as 'heads of households'. Some countries were also seen to have identified 'pockets' of educational disadvantage and to have directed their efforts to meet their educational needs. It was apparent that girls and women were doubly disadvantaged in these communities through the interaction of class and gender.

The Panel noted that the important contribution of women to national development and the need to equip girls to perform their multiple roles were recognized by policy makers in India and Nepal. Recent research including 'Status of Women' and time allocation

studies have provided evidence of the intensive involvement of girls and women in economic and extra-domestic activities, and of their equal contribution to the economy and to household incomes in peasant societies and in the 'modern' sector. Although the lines between the 'public and private domains' have been traditionally blurred in the case of the majority of women in Asian agrarian societies, it is apparent that in many instances, nineteenth century Victorian norms of the 'domestication' of women continue to influence policies and programmes pertaining to educational provision and curriculum development.

## Planning perspectives and resource allocation

Budgetary allocations for primary education have clearly increased in all countries in consonance with the commitment to universalizing primary education. The central government in India has increased assistance to the States and to non-governmental organizations for specific educational programmes for girls. In some others, unrealistic targets for the participation of girls were juxtaposed with a situation in which resources were deflected from educational programmes for girls in the face of competing priorities and social demand. Where a significant quantum of external aid was channelled to programmes for the education of girls, there appeared to be a tendency to compartmentalize these projects outside the conceptual framework of national plans, and national representatives in Nepal expressed fears as to whether such a process may even distort national priorities.

The Panel also noted that the educational needs of girls were not adequately reflected in the objectives and activities of the on-going World Bank assisted primary education projects in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan, despite the fact that the disadvantaged educational status of girls is a major problem in these countries. An issue that emerged from discussions, therefore, was the need for long-term perspective planning and co-ordination of inputs if optimal benefits were to be achieved from programmes conceived for promoting the education of girls.

## Demand and supply

It is commonly assumed that the crucial problem in the education of girls in these countries is the non-utilization of educational facilities as a consequence of socio-cultural constraints. The Panel concluded from the presentations of national representatives and from their own observations that while this assumption was supported by some factual evidence, there was also an imbalance between the demand for the education of girls and the supply of available facilities in all countries. This gap between the provision of educational facilities and the demand for primary school places for girls in urban and even rural areas was underscored by educational administrators and representatives of women's organizations in some countries. A survey of rural attitudes to the

education of girls in Pakistan has revealed that the most frequent response to the question as to why girls were not enrolled in schools was the lack of schools. Improved female enrolment rates in recent decades also bear witness to increasingly more positive attitudes to the education of girls.

It was apparent that the resource constraints of economically developing societies and high population growth rates have made it virtually impossible for countries to meet the demand for education. Uneven distribution of schools, the operation of double shifts, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of basic facilities such as school furniture and equipment were reported to be common features of the educational scenario. Financial problems have prevented the implementation of programmes for the construction and repair of schools and recruitment of teachers. In some of their field visits Panel members observed the poor conditions of even those primary schools that are located in districts in close proximity to the metropolitan city. It was the view of several national representatives that girls were more disadvantaged than boys by the distance from home to school, particularly in countries in which the terrain and dispersed pattern of village settlement made schools even less accessible.

Utilization of educational facilities

Studies in all countries on factors that adversely affected the participation of girls in educational programmes pointed also to common problems pertaining to non-utilization of available facilities.

Mass poverty and the prevalence of child labour appeared to be important determinants of educational participation. In all four countries girls were more disadvantaged in this respect as the dependence of disadvantaged families on the labour of primary school age girls both within and outside the household was said to enhance their value as economic assets. Studies have shown that girls start their time consuming household chores at very young age, before boys begin to engage in economic activities. In a cultural context in which it is perceived to be degrading for boys to be involved in many domestic tasks, girls walk long distances to collect water, fuel and fodder, they cook and clean the house, look after younger siblings and also participate in economic activities such as assisting in agriculture and looking after cattle. It has been computed that the working day of a young school age girl is as long as that of an adult male.

The costs of education were also apt to be perceived by parents as a waste of scarce resources in view of social norms that ascribe exclusively domestic roles and child bearing for girls and women, in contradistinction to the economic realities of the lives of the majority of women to whom domesticity is an unattainable luxury. The evidence relating to the attitudes of parents towards the education of girls was conflicting and parental reactions appeared to be

ambivalent. Some researchers expressed the view that recalcitrant parents were less in number than commonly assumed and that societal attitudes and social practices were not implacably resistant to change. It was also felt that educational factors such as curriculum irrelevance and gender - specific nuances of the 'hidden' curriculum may tend to encourage early leaving.

## Strategies

While all four countries shared the problems engendered by the macro-structural constraints of economically developing and 'traditional' societies, each country was seen to have evolved its own strategies in the light of the perceptions of its policy-makers and the configuration of the physical and social environment. These strategies ranged from incentives and complementary structures to women teachers, and the exchange of experiences brought to focus both positive and negative trends and implications.

## Provision of incentives

Incentives inevitably loom large in societies in which the majority of the population live below what has been called the 'poverty line'. All four countries provided free primary education, but as tuition is only one component of the private costs of education, some of the countries have introduced a wide range of additional incentives at different times and in varying extent. These included free textbooks, stationery, uniforms, mid-day meals and scholarships for both boys and girls; free secondary education, special scholarships and attendance scholarships for girls; incentive awards for districts and schools with high enrolment of girls; and subsidized training programmes and free residential facilities for women teachers. The Panel was impressed by the wide array of incentives, and it was apparent that these incentives have had, by and large, a positive impact by extending educational opportunity to girls from socio-economic groups from urban, rural and remote areas who would otherwise have been deprived of education, and to thereby reducing both socio-economic and gender disparities in educational participation. Some pertinent issues that were raised in the discussions, however, reflected concerns in these countries.

The role of incentives was questioned in terms of whether they were expected to be instrumental in establishing norms of educational participation, or to promote participation directly. It was pointed out, too, that selective scholarships, for instance, could operate as disincentives to the larger number of non-recipients. On the other hand there was the evidence from a number of studies in all countries that incentives were necessary to meet at least some of the costs and opportunity costs of education. A study in India had indicated that the incentives offered currently were too small relative to the opportunity costs to economically disadvantaged families. The meritocratic principle may conceivably be applied in the case of secondary school scholarships but was clearly inappropriate

for a mass-oriented system such as primary education.

The management of incentives was perceived to be a major problem in these countries. In Bangladesh incentives had to be withdrawn as a result of management problems. An evaluation study in India had found that many of the incentive schemes were in operation in only a few states or districts. Poor planning, minimal village involvement and meagre resource allocation were reported to be responsible for the limited coverage and impact of incentives in different parts of the country.

There was criticism that the distribution of incentives was hampered by the ineffectiveness of the delivery and monitoring systems and consequent misallocation of resources or non-utilization of inputs. It was pointed out that the degree of utilization of incentives was also dependent on the extent to which relevant information was communicated to potential beneficiaries. A survey in Nepal had indicated that economically disadvantaged groups living in the vicinity of the capital city were unaware of the availability of such incentives. It was inferred that the majority of the population in remote areas would be oblivious of the existence of such programmes. The obvious implication was that information needed to be channelled specifically to parents and to the community.

An important incentive that appeared to be undervalued by educators is related to the function of education as an agent of economic and social mobility. Representatives of women's organizations in Nepal remarked succintly that universal primary education was hardly likely to be achieved if low income parents saw no instrumental value in educating their daughters. In Pakistan an investigation into the causes of non-enrolment of girls reported that the largest number of parents (42%) did not educate their daughters because they perceived no financial benefits. It was represented very forcefully that tangible results through further or vocational education had to be envisaged in order to raise the level of aspirations of parents regarding the education of their daughters.

Separate schools for girls

The Panel found that co-education was an issue that was uppermost in the consciousness of policy-makers. The official policy in Bangladesh, India and Nepal was co-education at primary level but policy makers and administrators admitted to pressures for the establishment of separate schools for girls. It transpired that this demand was articulated largely by elite families seeking perhaps to preserve the status quo in social relations, but it was nonetheless a problem to educational administrators.

In Pakistan co-education was encouraged but cultural imperatives necessitated the establishment of separate girls' schools. Limited resources had therefore to be stretched to provide two schools in place of one school. Two facets of this situation were noted to

affect gender equality adversely.

Social pressures created a preferential demand for boys' schools while social conservatism required that separate schools be established for girls. Consequently more boys schools were opened and only 30% of rural schools were reported to be girls' schools. The number of girls' schools was thus inadequate to meet either needs or demand and girls were specially disadvantaged in the context of dispersed population distribution.

Social pressures also determined that resource investment in girls' schools was appreciably less than in boys' schools. The Indian Status of Women Report describes very clearly the shortcomings and inferior status of separate girls' schools and underscores the consequent dangers of marginalization and reinforcement of gender inequalities in education. Policy makers were obviously faced with a dilemma and the only solution appeared to be attitudinal change in the community.

Non-formal education

In recent years non-formal education structures have been perceived to be an effective mechanism to meet the educational needs of children who are precluded by their economic activities or domestic responsibilities from attending formal schools. Successful innovative experiments have been carried out in India for some years with the support of international agencies. The flexibility of these programmes in terms of organization, time schedules and curriculum have helped to extend their reach to girls whose time constraints have hitherto deprived them of access to education. An extensive network of non-formal education centres are operated now in different parts of the country, and the need to increase the participation of girls in the context of universal primary education has led to the establishment of non-formal centres exclusively for girls.

The Panel was informed that resource constraints have influenced planners in India to rely heavily on such complementary structures as a strategy in extending educational opportunity. It is proposed therefore to enrol 50% of the 40 million children who are out of school in non-formal education centres. These centres are being conceptualized as feeder schools located around primary schools, and 100% central government assistance has been offered to state administrations and non-governmental organizations to expedite progress.

In Nepal in the last two years, non-formal part-time primary education programmes have been developed for out-of-school children in disadvantaged communities, both in remote districts with very low female enrolment as well as in pockets of educational disadvantage in more favoured districts. In all countries non-governmental agencies have experimented with non-formal education programmes,

albeit on a small scale. The Underprivileged Children's Educational Programme in Bangladesh and Nepal, for instance, offers condensed evening primary and secondary courses to children of the urban poor who are employed during the day in the informal sector in the city.

It appeared to the Panel that non-formal part-time primary education was being conceived as a direct attack on educational disadvantage. It has been difficult in the past to replicate pilot programmes that have owed their success to the commitment of pioneers and to the concentration of resources. The Panel found it significant therefore that a national strategy has been designed in at least one country, India, to complement the formal education system with non-formal education structures within a common framework of universal primary education. The Panel member from Pakistan in particular, was convinced of the relevance of this strategy for extending educational opportunity to girls in her own country.

Two issues appeared to be important in the light of the discussions that were generated. Panel members were informed that there was evidence that children were tending to drop-out of the formal school in order to enrol in non-formal classes which are apparently perceived as a 'soft option'. It was felt that this trend should be monitored and that safeguards should be built in by popularizing the 'feeder' concept and by providing for 'bridges' to the formal school. The crux of the matter was that non-formal education centres should be perceived as complementary rather than as alternative structures.

The 'status' of non-formal education was a major concern of panel members and national participants, as a disadvantaged clientele and a special or condensed curriculum could attach a stigma of 'second class' education to non-formal education. As almost all boys are claimed to be in schools in the two countries - India and Nepal - in which non-formal education programmes are being promoted, there was the danger that the 'secondary status' of girls in these countries could be reinforced. The role of education in the 'reproduction' of class structures and unequal gender relations is a subject of contemporary debate. Panel members felt therefore that it was essential to build 'bridges' from the non-formal structures to the formal system, and further to post-primary and vocational education, so that these centres could offer socio-economically disadvantaged families opportunities for upward mobility.

Feeder schools

The use of 'feeder' structures in extending educational opportunity was illustrated in Bangladesh in an experimental project in the education of girls. 'Feeder Schools' with Grades 1 to 3 primary classes have been established for girls within easy access from their homes in selected villages in one district. Only women teachers have been appointed to these 'schools' and girls who have completed Grade 2 - 3 have been admitted to the regular primary school. The success

of this project in promoting 100% participation and retention has stimulated policy-makers to envisage its replication on a national scale. It appeared to the Panel that this programme had several advantages in providing easy access in terms of distance, in supplementing the facilities of overcrowded primary schools, and in establishing a direct link with the formal school, and that it could be extended also on a co-educational basis. It would seem however, to require also the replication of the commitment and the community support of the pilot project to ensure its success as a national strategy.

Use of indigenous institutions

The Panel observed that Pakistan and Bangladesh were utilizing indigenous institutions as 'feeder schools' to extend provision for primary education. Religious institutions have been among the earliest centres of education, and resource constraints have motivated policy makers to use this tradition to 'integrate' mosque schools or religious schools attached to mosques into the primary education structure. Grades 1 to 3 classes were conducted in these schools and students are to be admitted to the regular primary school on completion of Grade 3. A honararium was paid to the Imam and a male primary school teacher was appointed by the government for secular instruction.

It was interesting to note that girls were admitted to mosque schools although they were manned entirely by male staff, and that the religious ethos of these schools made them culturally acceptable to conservative parents. No gender-wise enrolment statistics were available, however, to assess the extent of participation by girls.

It was reported that these schools had helped to increase enrolment substantially in Pakistan and that their proximity to the homes of children was a major asset in a country in which the distribution of educational facilities has been stymied by the dispersion of village settlements. Administrators claimed that the success of these schools had exceeded their expectations and that the target in the current Five Year Plan had been reached in two years. In the context of the new policy of focusing attention on Grades I-III in promoting universal enrolment, the mosque schools were evidently perceived to be an important component of the national strategy in primary education. In Bangladesh, mosque schools and maktabs were being utilized to complement the formal primary school system on similar lines but on a smaller scale.

The Panel was informed that the second experiment in utilizing a traditional institution in Pakistan - the Mohalla School - has had as yet limited coverage. These schools had been traditionally conducted in the homes of elderly women to whom conservative Muslim parents entrusted their daughters to be equipped with domestic skills for home management. The administration had sought to add secular instruction to this curriculum in order to provide additional avenues

of primary education for girls but had evidently been unable to organize an adequate supervisory system. Although 5000 such schools had been envisaged, very little progress was reported. The administration expressed interest in extending these schools with the co-operation of local bodies and the community but agreed that sufficient priority had not been given so far to this scheme. The mohalla school appeared also to be handicapped by the fact that it was an urban concept unlike the mosque school, and was therefore alien to the rural environment. The potential of these 'schools' as feeder institutions was still uncertain although they could perhaps be activated to meet the demand for separate schools.

Supply and training of women teachers

A major strategy adopted over a decade ago by Nepal and increasingly favoured by others has been the recruitment and training of women teachers as role models to increase the participation of girls and to counter cultural resistance to co-educational schools. It was noteworthy that whereas over half the teaching force consists of women in many countries, the proportion of women teachers in these countries ranged from 8% to 32% - the last in Pakistan where there were separate schools for girls.

The special programme to train women teachers as a strategy to promote the access of girls to education in Nepal was one of Unesco's earliest initiatives in the Region to reduce gender dispartities. It was observed that this pilot project had developed with subsequent UNICEF and Unesco-NORAD support into a national programme drawing trainees from 74 of 75 districts. Both the teacher training programme and its upgrading component were integrated into the formal system of education and had inbuilt financial incentives and residential facilities. While evaluation studies have reported a positive impact on teacher supply in remote areas and on community attitudes to the education of girls, the Panel felt that the experience of this programme indicated that training of women teachers in conventional programmes per se could make only very limited impact on the participation of girls in primary education. It was apparent that women teachers were only one input in a complex process, that employment had to be guaranteed after training so that resources invested would not be wasted, and that women teachers must be purposefully conscientized during their training programme to function as catalysts for change and as role models.

The rationale for employing women teachers in order to change community attitudes to the education of girls appeared to be rooted in the socio-cultural milieu in all four countries. Policies have been formulated recently in Bangladesh and Pakistan to recruit women teachers on an even more extensive scale. Bangladesh hoped to fill 50% of its vacancies in primary schools with women teachers, and Pakistan wished to replace all male primary school teachers with women teachers, but there is no evidence of significant progress in

this respect as recruitment policies are vulnerable to economic constraints. India and Pakistan have attempted to attract women teachers to rural schools by constructing rent free residences near schools. It is reported that 50% of these residences are unutilized as the practice of unmarried women teachers living independently in 'quarters' is antithetical to cultural norms. In Bangladesh, 500 women teachers have been recruited under the World Bank assisted primary education project but project reports do not reflect any specific concern to equip them to promote the participation of girls. Special teacher training institutes have been organized for women teachers and hostels built in others to increase the intake of women teachers into conventional training programmes.

If women teachers are to be appointed in order to facilitate the participation of girls, a link has obviously to be established between these two overtly independent activities. The Panel noted a lacuna in this respect in the teacher education curriculum which tended to follow conventional lines, except in programmes for non-formal education teachers or facilitators who are trained in a specific context. It seemed to the Panel that both men and women teachers need to be equipped to motivate parents and the community to send their girls to school as well as to promote attitudinal change within the classroom and to meet the educational needs of girls whose out of school experiences may impede their progress. The Unesco Sub-regional Workshop organized in 1984 took initiatives which it is hoped will stimulate curriculum revision in teacher education programmes.

Curriculum Development

As they moved from country to country Panel members observed that policies to increase the participation of girls had barely impinged on curriculum development or revision. There was much criticism that the curriculum took little note of the social realities of the lives of women in agrarian societies. In India and Nepal special needs-based curriculum materials have been developed for non-formal education programmes for primary school age girls, and in India non-formal programmes were seen to offer enrichment courses to develop individual potential and creativity.

It was recognized that separate curricula, whether it is for the urban and rural environment or for boys and girls, contributed to widening disparities. In Bangladesh, India and Pakistan research teams had identified gender role stereotypes in educational materials, and in India new materials had been prepared to project a more positive image of women but it was reported that these materials were not used extensively in the school system. In Nepal achievement tests had shown that the achievement levels of girls in mathematics in the primary school was lower than that of boys. In India the need was articulated for a common curriculum for boys and girls inclusive of mathematics and science and for remedial instruction to compensate for learning difficulties and socio-cultural handicaps. It was interesting

to note also that two decades earlier a committee in this country had advocated a common curriculum including home science for boys and girls till the end of the middle school.

These issues, however, did not appear to receive adequate attention from the point of view of retention, achievement levels, relevance or individual development. To many the connotation of access appeared to exclude outcomes. The distribution of knowledge and transfer of 'cultural capital' had not changed significantly. The home science syndrome was still reported to channel girls away from agriculture or other economically viable subject areas. Curriculum materials continued to reflect the norms of domesticity and dependency thereby adversely affecting the self concept and performance of girls as argued by proponents of socialization theories of gender differences. In Pakistan, a study had revealed, in fact, that girls and women had negative self concepts conditioned by their cumulative social learning experiences. While a non-formal educational programme in India had a common curriculum including practical activities for boys and girls, most non-formal skill training programmes were seen to be modelled on the conventional demarcation of the labour market into masculine and feminine areas.

Distance learning

All countries were using to some degree or were planning to use distance education techniques to reach a larger clientele than was possible through face-to-face formal or non-formal education programmes. In Pakistan the Open University conducted basic education courses for women who have never been to school and secondary education courses for girls who had dropped out of school. The satellite programme in India was used for adult education in remote villages. But distance education techniques did not seem to have been evolved yet in any country to cater to young primary school children.

An area with much potential was the training of teachers but although distance learning was utilized in primary teacher training programmes in India, Nepal and Pakistan, there was no specific focus on the role of teachers in promoting the participation of girls in education.

Early childhood education

An interesting trend noted by the Panel in some countries was the change in the traditional conceptualization of pre-school programmes as nursery schools for the children of the affluent, creches for children of women workers or delivery systems in health and nutrition programmes. In India where there was a practice already of pre-school centres attached to primary schools in some locations, early childhood education centres were being planned near primary schools as a national strategy in order to give a 'head start' to children of disadvantaged population groups and to reduce dropping out by school age girls with child care responsibilities. 100% assistance

has been offered to non-governmental agencies and to individuals to establish such centres. The experience so far of the Integrated Child Development Service in this country, however, suggests that while health, nutrition and child care facilities are relatively easier to distribute if an efficient delivery system is available, qualitative educational inputs tend to receive low priority in view of their greater complexity of operation.

In Nepal a project was being introduced in two districts experimentally to facilitate access to education through the same mechanism of establishing pre-school centres near primary schools. It is hoped that pre-school educational activities will be structured to develop individual potential and creativity irrespective of preconceived perceptions of gender differences.

Little official interest was evinced in other countries in pre-school activities in view of their preoccupation with programmes to promote universal primary education. Non-governmental and women's organizations too appeared to have limited involvement in this area. It was apparent that in a context of scarce resources and imbalance between demand and supply in primary education, it will be necessary to activate voluntary organizations and the community to support pre-school programmes to fill the present vacuum. The absence of such facilities was reflected in the enrolment of pre-school age children in overcrowded Grade 1 classes and in the incidence of dropping out of school age girls with child care commitments.

## Monitoring and evaluation

A concern that was manifest in discussions was the ineffectiveness of the delivery system, shortcomings in the utilization of inputs and consequent under-expenditure and wastage of resources. In all countries the gap between objectives and outcomes was partly attributed to weakness in monitoring procedures, which were compounded in decentralized administrative structures in which States or provinces enjoyed considerable autonomy in programme implementation.

Many monitoring procedures were being tried out in the supervision of educational programmes for girls. Women were appointed along with men to supervisory positions in sub-districts in Bangladesh. In Pakistan, local women co-ordinators were proposed, chiefly as a low cost mechanism. A Women's Education Unit had been established in Nepal for co-ordination and monitoring educational programmes for girls and women, and cost effective monitoring procedures had been evolved for non-formal part-time primary education programmes by a system of payment for each completed unit of work.

There was consensus that existing structures should be used for monitoring as a parallel structure could create confusion as well as marginalize programmes for girls. But it was recognized that there was need to strengthen the institutional capabilities of Women's

Education Units or cells and Ministries of Education, to build in monitoring and systematic evaluation of performance into all programmes and to ensure co-ordination of inputs and co-ordination with other ministries and departments.

A phenomenon that intrigued some panel members was the availability of extensive data generated by studies by research institutions during the UN Decade for Women and by evaluation reports, and the absence of overt evidence that this data was taken into account in the formulation, revision, implementation and monitoring of educational programmes for girls. This situation is perhaps another illustration of the dichotomy between social science research and socio-economic policies in many economically developed and developing countries.

Community participation

It was reiterated by governmental and non-governmental personnel that the Ministry of Education by itself could not bring all girls to school and that community action was necessary to trigger demand and to ensure utilization of services but the Panel did not see evidence of a mass-based community campaign in support of universalizing primary education in any country. In view of the attitudinal base of non-enrolment of girls in all countries, community campaigns in which community leaders, teachers and families of potential target groups participated were seen to be a pre-requisite for promoting more positive attitudes to the education of girls and for mobilizing community resources for educational programmes.

It was clear from past experience that community participation did not take place automatically. Two positive trends were noted - the use of participatory micro-level or block level planning techniques in India and the involvement of elected representatives in all countries as political will was perceived to be an important component of community participation.

There appeared to be awareness too of the link between adult literacy and universalization of primary education. Attention was focused on several occasions on the importance of adult literacy programmes in stimulating community action to support primary education programmes. This awareness had been strengthened by the findings of studies that levels of aspiration and achievement motivation tended to be low in communities with poor adult literacy rates and that there was a positive relationship between the educational level of parents and the educational participation of their children.

The Panel felt that community involvement was a "felt need" in all countries but that a strategy had yet to be evolved for this purpose.

Use of the mass media

The negative image of women presented in the mass media and its impact on attitudes and aspirations have been a major concern in both economically developed and developing countries. Panel members noted that studies in India and Pakistan have provided evidence of the portrayal of girls and women as weak, passive and dependent or 'frivolous' in the media in these countries.

Efforts, however, have been made in recent years in many countries to use the media not only to promote more positive attitudes but also to create consciousness of the need to improve the 'status' of women. While a beginning has been made in this respect in disseminating information relating to educational programmes for girls and women through the media, it appeared to the Panel that the potential of the mass media as a vehicle for creating community awareness has yet to be adequately tapped.

The role of women's organizations

Women's organizations were seen to be active in all countries and the panel met several very committed and articulate women who were sensitive to the problems of gender and socio-economic disparities. Where education was concerned, the All Pakistan Women's Association Organization was directly involved in the provision of formal educational facilities for girls from primary to further education.

On the whole, women's organizations, as elsewhere in the Third World, tended to concentrate on literacy-cum-income generating skills-cum-family health programmes for adult women - a model that has received the patronage of international and bilateral agencies but has been found in practice to lack local specificity and relevance to the needs of the socially and economically disadvantaged. In some of the countries, however, grass roots level women's organizations do exist and have been successful in activating local support for educational programmes. It was agreed by some national representatives as well as by some panel members that the recent proposal in Nepal to decentralize government funds through districts in the periphery was likely to encourage community participation at grass roots level and to channel resources to the most disadvantaged.

While women's organization have a role in complementing the resources of the state in formal, non-formal and pre-school education, their most important function is to create awareness in the community and to motivate parents to utilize available facilities. Many women leaders whom the Panel met were aware of the need for community-oriented and community based campaigns. The success of participatory programmes in Third World societies has shown that the most effective mechanism is to mobilize women's groups in disadvantaged communities through facilitators or change - agents who could conscientize them to break through dependent patron - client

relationships and to operate as a pressure group in the community for the provision and utilization of educational facilities and for universalization of primary education.

Conclusion

The interaction of Panel members and national representatives thus encompassed a wide spectrum of issues that reflects the multi-faceted nature of the problem of promoting the education of girls in countries where equal access to education has yet to be achieved. In the course of this interchange of experiences, policy issues, strategies, constraints, supportive structures, community participation and the role of women's groups were reviewed in the light of needs and problems.

The Panel felt that considerable ground has to be covered before equality of educational opportunity can be achieved in these countries. The commitment to promoting equal access of girls to education has to be reflected in specific programmes and not merely in national plans which tend to set targets that often cannot be achieved without adequate supportive measures. These programmes in turn need to be articulated in an over-all strategy that conceptualizes equal opportunity in primary education as well as in crucial areas of further education so that all women may come out of the shadows to a place in the sun. Such a policy orientation also pre-supposes effective co-ordination and monitoring of inputs in a national framework instead of the conglomeration of ad hoc programmes that are frequently found in economically developing countries assisted by external aid programmes and investments.

Panel members also identified some priorities for the immediate future. They could not envisage the provision of adequate facilities through the existing formal education system in the next few years. Low enrolment and retention rates despite decades of plans and programmes indicate that a frontal attack has to be made in these countries through measures of 'positive discrimination' such as incentives and part-time and full-time complementary education programmes. But it was felt very strongly that there should be a proviso that such programmes should provide equal access to further education and to a better quality of life. This condition was seen as a priority as it appeared to the Panel that resources had often tended to be dissipated in the organization of pilot programmes which have neither had extensive impact nor conceptual acceptance as equal educational opportunity.

In the context of the experiences of the Region supportive mechanisms were perceived to be germane to the task of achieving universal primary education. While the recruitment and training of teachers, pre-school education, adult literacy and community development programmes have been utilized as concomitant strategies, the Panel felt that such programmes have yet to be linked integrally in the over-all framework of equal access and participation. Each

of these programmes has to be related to specific problems and constraints. Pre-school centres must cater also to the needs of families in which girls drop out to look after younger siblings. Teacher education, adult literacy and community programmes must incorporate a specific programme component for creating awareness of the need to educate girls and for promoting participation tangibly.

In the long term, curriculum development and revision in school and teacher education institutions were considered to be basic to the promotion of gender equality in the light of the operation of the school as an agent of social control through the gender relations and attitudes it develops and its distribution of knowledge, allocation of skills and legitimization of credentials. This was perceived to be an area in which restructuring and experimentation are necessary, in curriculum options, in the development of new educational materials, in remediation and in the introduction of compensatory programmes that may stimulate individual achievement and personality development.

In heterogeneous societies each community has its own problems and priorities. Only participatory planning and mobilization of the community, and particularly of girls and women were felt to have the potential for creating the momentum necessary for the successful implementation of programmes for the education of girls in disadvantaged communities. In all societies educational opportunity would be an euphemism unless education improve 'life chances', and individual worth and dignity irrespective of gender were conceived to be the underpinnings of educational plans and programmes.

The Panel visits were envisaged in the context of Unesco's role as a catalytic agent in promoting the education of girls. It is hoped that the insights gained will enrich individual perceptions and stimulate the development of national and regional action programmes based on concerns for equity and social justice.

Annex I

REGIONAL PANEL

The members of the Regional Panel were:

Dr. M.N. Haque
Director-General
National Institute for Educational Administration
Extension and Research
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Mr. M.M. Kapoor
Head, Sub-national Systems Unit
National Institute of Educational Planning
and Administration
New Delhi, India

Mrs. Kamal Rana
Member, Raj Sabha
Kathmandu, Nepal

Dr. (Miss) Iftikhar Hassan
Dean, Allama Iqbal Open University
Islamabad, Pakistan

Mrs. Mina Siaguru
Chairperson
Commission for Higher Education
Boroko, Papua New Guinea

Unesco Secretariat:

Dr. P.K. Kasaju
Specialist in Developmental Research in Education
Unesco, Bangkok

Dr. Swarna Jayaweera
Consultant
Co-ordinator
Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR)
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Annex II

LIST OF STEERING COMMITTEES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bangladesh | Mr. Mahmud Aminul Islam<br>Additional Secretary (Dev.)<br>Ministry of Education | - Chairman |
| | Dr. M.N. Haq<br>Director-General<br>National Institute for Educational Administration Extension and Research<br>Dhaka | |
| | Dr. Zahirul Islam Bhuiyan<br>Director-General<br>Primary Education, Dhaka | |
| | Representative of Foundation for Research on Educational Planning and Development (FREPD)<br>Dhaka University | |
| | Mr. A.R. Chowdhury<br>Secretary<br>Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco | |
| | Mrs. Salma Akhtar<br>Assistant Professor<br>Institute of Educational Research | |
| | Begum Quazi Halima<br>Upazila Education Officer<br>Manikganj | |
| India* | Minister of Education<br>Ministry of Education<br>Government of India | - Chairman |

*In India there is already a high level committee for promoting the education of girls and women. The same committee has been designated responsible for the promotion of the education of girls under the APEID programme. Other names appearing in this list are members of the national study team.

Shri Y.N. Chaturvedi
Joint Secretary
Ministry of Education
New Delhi

Dr. K.N. Hiriyannaiah
Head, Survey and Data Processing Unit
National Council for Educational Research
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Shri M.M. Kapoor
Fellow & Head
Sub-National Systems Unit
National Institute for Educational
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New Delhi

Shri R.S. Uppal
Senior Research Officer
Planning Commission
New Delhi

Shri M. Lakshminaryana
Deputy Secretary
Ministry of Education
New Delhi

Nepal

Dr. N.N. Singh - Chairman
Secretary
Ministry of Education and Culture

Mrs. Kamal Rana
Member Raj Sabha

Dr. B.K. Mallik
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Research Centre for Educational
Innovation and Development

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Curriculum, Teaching and Supervision
Development Centre

Mrs. Chapala Pande
Under Secretary
National Planning Commission

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Mrs. Neelam Basnet
Co-ordinator
Women's Education Unit
Ministry of Education and Culture

Dr. Vijaya L. Shrestha
Sociologist and Consultant

Pakistan

Mr. A.G. Mufti - Chairman
Director-General
Academy of Educational Planning
and Management

Mrs. Sabiha Syed
Director-General
Women's Division
Islamabad

Dr. (Miss) Iftikhar Hassan
Dean
Allama Iqbal Open University
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President, All Pakistan Women's
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Primary and Non-Formal Education Wing
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Academy of Educational Planning
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Papua New Guinea

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Principal Project Officer
Planning and Research Commission for
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Principal Psychologist Post
and Tele-Communications Corporation

Ms. P. Quartermaine
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Ms. S. Tawaiyole
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University of Papua New Guinea

Dr. S. Weeks
Director
Education Research Unit
University of Papua New Guinea

Ms. M. Williams
Executive Officer
Commission for Higher Education

Annex III

PROGRAMME

1. Dhaka, Bangladesh 27-30 May 1985

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 26-27 May | | Arrival of Panel members in Dhaka, Bangladesh |
| 28 May | (i) | Meeting with the National Steering Committee, officials of the Ministry of Education and representatives of non-governmental organizations at the National Institute of Educational Administration, Extension and Research. |
| | (ii) | Meeting with the National Study Team at the Foundation for Research on Educational Planning for Development. |
| | (iii) | Meeting with the Project Director, Universalization of Primary Education (IDA) Project, Unesco Chief Technical Adviser and other project personnel. |
| 29 May | | Field visit to Savar - to sub-district office and Primary School |
| 30 May | (i) | Meeting with Director-General, Primary Education. |
| | (ii) | Meeting with Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture. |
| | (iii) | Meeting at UNDP Office, Dhaka with Deputy Resident Representative, Programme Officer (Social Sector) and Unesco Advisers. |

2. Kathmandu, Nepal 31 May - 2 June 1985

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 31 May | (i) | Field visit |
| | | a) Non-formal part-time primary and pre-primary education programme for out-of-school girls, Bhelukhel, Bhaktapur |
| | | b) Primary Section of Lower Secondary School, Bhaktapur |
| | (ii) | Meeting with Hon. Minister of Education and Culture. |

(iii) Meeting with Steering Committee including Secretary, Ministry of Education, Senior Officials of Ministry, University and Planning Commission.

(iv) Meeting with representatives of the Women's Services Co-ordinating Committee and affiliated organizations and institutions.

(v) Meeting with Chairman, Nepal Women's Organization.

1 June - Official Holiday

2 June (i) Meeting with national study committee at the Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development.

(ii) Interviews with media personnel.

3. Delhi, India 3-6 June 1985

3 June (i) Meeting - Ministry of Education

(ii) Meeting - National Council for Educational Research and Training

a) Joint-Director, NCERT and officers
b) Unit for Special Programmes - Women's Educational Unit
c) Social Services and Humanities Division

4 June (i) Meeting with Educational Adviser and staff, National Planning Commission.

(ii) Meeting with Director and staff, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration.

5 June (i) Field visit - Bal Bhawan, non-formal programme for co-curriculum activities.

(ii) Meeting with UNICEF staff involved in educational programmes.

(iii) Meeting with Director and staff, Unesco Regional Office for Science and Technology

(iv) Meeting with staff, Department of Social Work, Delhi University.

(v) Field visit to non-formal literacy and skill training programme for girls and women under Western Yuvak Kandra, Nanglai.

6 June (i) Meeting with National Study Committee at Ministry of Education.

(ii) Meeting with Policy Planning Division, National Council for Educational Research and Training.

4. Islamabad, Pakistan 7-9 June 1985

7 June - Official Holiday

8 June
(i) Meeting with Chairman and staff, Literacy and Mass Education Commission.

(ii) Meeting with Vice-Chancellor and senior staff of Allama Iqbal Open University and visit to University.

(iii) Meeting with Director and staff, National Institute of Psychology.

9 June
(i) Meeting with Secretary and high level officials, Ministry of Education and Culture

(ii) Meeting with National Steering Committee and National Study Committee at the Academy of Educational Planning and Management.

(iii) Meeting with Chief and staff, Primary and Non-formal Education Wing of the Ministry of Education and adviser and staff IDA Primary Education Project.

(iv) Meeting with media personnel.

(v) Meeting with Minister of Education and representatives of Women's Organizations.

10 June - Departure

## SELECTED APEID PUBLICATIONS
## RELATING TO UNIVERSALIZATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

- *Universalizing education: linking formal and non-formal programmes; report. 1979.*
- *Universalizing education: strategies for development and use of instructional materials; report. 1979.*
- *Universalizing education: selected innovative experiences: new techniques for preparing educational personnel. 1980.*
- *New personnel profiles in relation to changes in society and educational systems. 1980.*
- *In-service teacher education: developing innovatory strategies and instructional materials; report. 1980.*
- *Designing instructional materials for general education and teacher training: a portfolio of experiences in Asia and Oceania. 1980.*
- *Preparing educational personnel: training methodologies based on locally available learning resources; report. 1980.*
- *Linking science education in real life; curriculum design, development and implementation; report. 1980.*
- *Towards better health and nutrition; report. 1981.*
- *Social changes and new profiles of educational personnel; national studies: India, Nepal, Philippines, Republic of Korea. 1981.*

  *Report of the study group meeting on evaluation and development of innovative methods of teaching with reference to problems of multiple classes and disadvantaged groups. 1981.*

  *Integrating subject areas in primary education curriculum – a joint innovative project; report. 1982.*
- *Distance learning for teacher education; report. 1982 (3 vols.)*

  *Multiple class teaching and education of disadvantaged groups; national studies: India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Republic of Korea. 1982.*

  *Learning needs and problems in primary education; report. 1983 (2 vols).*

  *Training of educational personnel for integrated curriculum; report. 1984.*

  *Towards universalization of primary education in Asia and the Pacific: country studies (of 12 countries) and a regional overview. 1984.*

  *Mutual co-operation for schools development; some experiences from Asia and the Pacific; report. 1985.*

  *Grass roots networking for primary education; case studies: Thailand, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Japan. 1985.*

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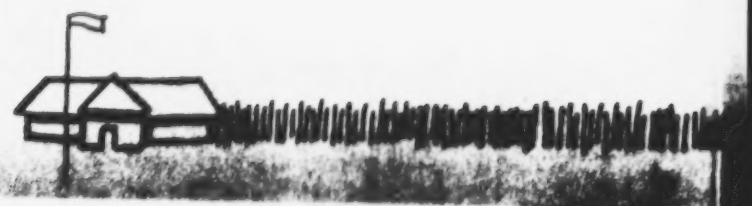

**The Asia and Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID)** has as its primary goal to contribute to the building of national capabilities for undertaking educational innovations linked to the problems of national development, thereby improving the quality of life of the people in the Member States.

All projects and activities within the framework of APEID are designed, developed and implemented co-operatively by the participating Member States through over one hundred national centres which they have associated for this purpose with APEID.

The 25 Member States participating in APEID are Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga and Turkey.

Each country has set up a National Development Group (NDG) to identify and support educational innovations for development within the country and facilitate exchange between countries.

The Asian Centre of Educational Innovation for Development (ACEID), an integral part of the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, co-ordinates the activities under APEID and assists the Associated Centres (AC) in carrying them out.

The programme areas under which the APEID activities are organized during the third cycle (1982-1986) are:

1. Universalization of education: access to education at first level by both formal and non-formal means;
2. Education for promotion of scientific and technological; competence and creativity;
3. Education and work;
4. Education and rural development;
5. Educational technology with stress on mass media and low-cost instructional materials;
6. Professional support services and training of educational personnel;
7. Co-operative studies and innovative projects of research and research-based experimentation related to educational development.



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